

**Board of Veterans Services
Meeting Minutes
August 10, 2011**

A meeting of the Board of Veterans Services (BVS) was held on Wednesday, August 10, 2011 at the Virginia War Memorial, 621 S. Belvidere Street, Richmond.

Members Present

- John Anderson
- William G. Haneke
- Donald Kaiserman
- Kate Kohler
- Thad Jones
- Sandra Love
- George Melnyk
- Al Sample
- Christopher Stolle
- Jack Hilgers, representing the Veterans Services Foundation
- George Corbett, representing the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations
- Paul Galanti, Commissioner of Veterans Services

Members Absent

- Richard Anderson
- Mamye BaCote
- John Edwards
- Toddy Puller
- J. W. Peyton Robertson

Commonwealth of Virginia Officials Present

- Jim Hopper, Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs and Homeland Security
- Carol Rauschberg, Department of Human Resources Management
- Cynthia Norwood, Office of the Attorney General
- Anne Atkins, Department of Veterans Services
- Steven Combs, Department of Veterans Services
- Jeff McMahan, Department of Veterans Services
- Judy Reid, Department of Veterans Services
- Mike Rogers, Department of Veterans Services
- Danielle Weaver, Department of Veterans Services
- Cathy Wilson, Department of Veterans Services

Others Present

- Mary Jo Fields, Virginia Municipal League
- Tommie McNeil, Jr., Virginia Public Radio

Materials Distributed in the Agenda Packet

- Agenda
- Benefits Committee Report and Recommendation #1: Benefits Section Staffing (Agenda Item III a)
- Benefits Committee Report and Recommendation #2: Ratio of Claims Agents to Veterans (Agenda Item III b)
- Benefits Committee Report and Recommendation #3: Education Section Staffing (Agenda Item III c)
- Benefits Committee Report and Recommendation #4: Mental Health Issues facing Veterans (refer to Virginia Wounded Warrior Program for study and recommendation) (Agenda Item III d)
- Care Center Committee Report and Recommendation #1: Care Center Staffing (Agenda Item III e)
- Care Center Committee Report and Recommendation #2: Hampton Roads Veterans Care Center Pre-Planning Study (Agenda Item III f)
- Cemeteries Committee Report and Recommendation #1: Cemeteries Staffing (Agenda Item III g)
- Cemeteries Committee Report and Recommendation #2: Virginia Veterans Cemetery Woods Walkway Project (Agenda Item III h)
- BVS Chairman Report and Recommendation #1: Voting status of BVS *ex officio* members (Agenda Item III i)
- BVS Chairman Report and Recommendation #2: Adding additional citizen members to the BVS (Agenda Item III j)
- Review and Endorse JLC Legislative Recommendations (Agenda Item III k)

Call to Order

Chairman Thad Jones called the meeting to order at 10:06 am.

Chairman Jones led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

Chairman Jones introduced Delegate Christopher Stolle as a new board member. Del. Stolle gave a brief synopsis of his background.

Roll Call and Quorum Determination

The roll was called, and with 11 of 19 members present a quorum was determined. Ms. Kate Kohler arrived later, bringing the number of members present to 12. Mr. George Corbett was present as the representative for the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations and Mr. Jack Hilgers as the representative for the Veterans Services Foundation.

Approval of Agenda

Chairman Jones asked for a motion to approve the agenda as presented (*Attachment 1*).

Mr. William Haneke made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. John Anderson. The motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Jones then asked Mr. Steven Combs to introduce guests and staff. Their names and organizations are recorded above.

Approval of June 15, 2011 minutes

Chairman Jones asked for a motion to approve the June 15, 2011 minutes as presented, noting that the minutes had previously been sent electronically to the members.

Mr. Don Kaiserman made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. Haneke. The motion carried unanimously.

New Business

Chairman Jones explained that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss several position papers to be presented to the Governor as directed in Executive Order 29 (EO29). He stated that there were 10 position papers to review.

Benefits Committee Report and Recommendation #1: Benefits Section Staffing

Mr. Bill Haneke, Benefits Committee Chairman, thanked Mr. Combs and the DVS staff for the assistance in preparing these position papers. He then reviewed the position paper on Benefits Section Staffing (*Attachment 2*).

Mr. Haneke made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. George Melnyk, to adopt the recommendations of the Benefits Committee related to Benefit Section Staffing, as outlined in the position paper.

Discussion followed, with the Board members asking several clarifying questions of Mr. Haneke and Mr. Combs.

The motion carried unanimously.

Benefits Committee Report and Recommendation #2: Ratio of Claims Agents to Veterans

Mr. Haneke reviewed the position paper on Ratio of Claims Agents to Veterans (*Attachment 3*).

Del. Stolle suggested that the position papers on Benefits Section Staffing and Ratio of Claims Agents to Veterans should be combined as one objective.

Delegate Stolle noted that Recommendation #2 changes the staffing requirement in the Code, while Recommendation #1 states what would be done with the additional resources provided to meet the new Code requirements.

Del. Stolle made a **motion, seconded** by Dr. John Anderson to adopt the recommendations of the Benefits Committee relating to the ratio of claims agents to veterans, as outlined in the position

paper, and to combine Benefits Committee Recommendation #1 with Recommendation #2.

Discussion followed, with the Board members asking several clarifying questions. The motion carried unanimously.

Benefits Committee Report and Recommendation #3: Education Section Staffing

Mr. Haneke reviewed the position paper on Education Section Staffing (*Attachment 4*).

Ms. Kate Kohler made a **motion, seconded** by Ms. Sandra Love to adopt the recommendations of the Benefits Committee related to Education Section Staffing, as outlined in the position paper.

Discussion followed, and the motion carried unanimously.

Benefits Committee Report and Recommendation #4: Mental Health Issues facing Veterans

Mr. Haneke reviewed the position paper on Mental Health Issues facing Veterans (*Attachment 5*).

Mr. Melnyk made a **motion, seconded** by Dr. Anderson, to adopt the recommendations of the Benefits Committee related to Mental Health Issues facing Veterans, as outlined in the position paper.

Ms. Catherine Wilson, Executive Director of the Virginia Wounded Warrior Program (VWWP) addressed the Board and reviewed the composition and function of the VWWP Executive Strategy Board and Advisory Board.

The board discussed the recommendation, and the motion carried unanimously.

Care Center Committee Report and Recommendation #1: Care Center Staffing

Dr. Anderson, member of the Care Centers Committee, reviewed the position paper on Care Center Staffing (*Attachment 6*).

Mr. Al Sample made a **motion, seconded** by Del. Stolle, to adopt the recommendations of the Care Centers Committee related to Care Center Staffing, as outlined in the position paper.

Discussion followed. Chairman Jones then called for a vote, and the motion carried unanimously.

Care Center Committee Report and Recommendation #2: Hampton Roads Veterans Care Center Pre-Planning Study

Dr. Anderson reviewed the position paper on Hampton Roads Veterans Care Center Pre-

Planning Study (Attachment 7).

Mr. Haneke made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. Melnyk, to adopt the recommendations of the Care Centers Committee related to the Hampton Roads Veterans Care Center Pre-Planning Study, as outlined in the position paper

The board discussed the Hampton Roads Veterans Care Center Pre-Planning Study, and the motion carried unanimously.

Cemeteries Committee Report and Recommendation #1: Cemeteries Staffing

Mr. Melnyk, Cemeteries Committee Chairman, reviewed the position paper on Cemeteries Staffing (Attachment 8).

Mr. Haneke made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. Anderson, that this issue be tabled, as recommended by the Cemeteries Committee in the position paper. The motion carried unanimously.

Cemeteries Committee Report and Recommendation #2: Virginia Veterans Cemetery Woods Walkway Project

Mr. Melnyk reviewed the position paper on Virginia Veterans Cemetery Woods Walkway Project (Attachment 9). Mr. Kaiserman told the Board about his involvement with this project and explained that he would ask the veterans service organizations represented on the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (the JLC) to support this project. Mr. Hilgers stated that the Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) was working on this project as well.

Mr. Anderson made a **motion, seconded** by Del. Stolle, that this issued be tabled, as recommended by the Cemeteries Committee, and that Mr. Kaiserman stay involved with the project as part of the Board's Code-mandated duties.

The motion carried unanimously.

BVS Chairman Report and Recommendation #1: Voting status of BVS *ex officio* members

Chairman Jones reviewed the position paper on voting status of BVS *ex officio* members (Attachment 10).

Del. Stolle made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. Haneke, to adopt the recommendations of the BVS Chairman, as outlined in the position paper.

Dr. Anderson asked about the voting status of the BVS, JLC, and VSF chairmen on the JLC and VSF. Mr. Combs explained that the BVS and JLC chairmen were voting members of the VSF, but that the BVS and VSF chairmen were not voting members of the JLC. He noted that this was because of the unique makeup of the JLC – as a Council of representatives of the Veterans Service Organizations.

Dr. Anderson stated his opinion that the chairmen of each board should have voting privileges on the other boards, as this would help to promote inter-board unity.

Mr. Hilgers reiterated the unique nature of the JLC and why neither the Chairmen of the BVS and VSF, nor the Commissioner of Veterans Services, were voting members of the JLC.

Mr. George Corbett agreed to present the issue to the JLC to get the Council's input on Dr. Anderson's suggestion.

Chairman Jones called for a vote on the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

BVS Chairman Report and Recommendation #2: Adding additional citizen members to the BVS

Chairman Jones reviewed the position paper on adding additional citizen members to the BVS (*Attachment 11*). Chairman Jones pointed out that there are currently 11 citizen members appointed by the Governor, three ex officio members and five legislators.

Mr. Haneke made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. Melnyk, to adopt the recommendations of the BVS Chairman, as outlined in the position paper.

Discussion followed, with Mr. Hilgers noting that when the number of citizen members on the VSF was increased several years ago, the VSF was much better positioned to meet Code requirements.

The motion carried unanimously.

Review and Endorse JLC Legislative Recommendations

Mr. Corbett, JLC Representative, reviewed the JLC's EO29 recommendations (*Attachment 12*). He stated that the JLC met on July 13 and adopted these three EO29 recommendations to Governor McDonnell. Mr. Corbett also noted that the Council had voted to send a resolution to the Governor, asking him to take steps to reduce homelessness among Virginia veterans.

Mr. Corbett asked that the BVS vote to endorse the JLC's EO29 recommendations to Governor McDonnell, and that the BVS support the JLC's resolution to the Governor, asking him to take steps to reduce homelessness among Virginia veterans.

Mr. Kaiserman made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. Haneke, to endorse the JLC's EO29 recommendations to Governor McDonnell, and that the BVS support the JLC's resolution to the Governor, asking him to take steps to reduce homelessness among Virginia veterans.

The motion carried unanimously.

Prepare for Next Meeting

Chairman Jones stated the next Board meeting is scheduled for September 14, but that he was of the opinion that, as a result of today's meeting, the September 14 meeting should be cancelled.

Ms. Kohler made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. Haneke, to cancel the September 14 meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Jones stated that the next BVS meeting will be on November 16 at a location to be determined. He noted that during the November 14 meeting the Board will be adopting the 2012 meeting schedule, discuss and adopt the BVS 2012 plan of action, review FY11 operations and review the DVS strategic plan.

Ms. Kohler stated that she visited the Virginia Department of Veterans Services Benefit Office in Quantico, where she met with Mr. Jason Williams and Ms. Audrey Perdue. She stated that both Mr. Williams and Ms. Perdue were very pleasant and reviewed the benefit process with her. She said she will be visiting the Fairfax office next. She will then make a report to the Benefits Committee and then to BVS.

Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

ATTACHMENT 1

**Board of Veterans Services
Virginia War Memorial
621 S. Belvidere Street
Richmond
August 10, 2011
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

AGENDA

- I. Opening, Pledge of Allegiance, Roll Call and Introduction of Members, Quorum Determination, Approval of Agenda, and Introduction of DVS Staff and Guests – *Thad Jones, BVS Chairman* (10:00 – 10:05)
- II. Approval of June 15, 2011 Meeting Minutes – *Thad Jones, BVS Chairman* (10:05 – 10:10)
- III. New Business (10:10 – 11:50)
 - a. Benefits Committee Report and Recommendation #1: Benefits Section Staffing – *Bill Haneke, Committee Chairman*
 - b. Benefits Committee Report and Recommendation #2: Ratio of Claims Agents to Veterans – *Bill Haneke, Committee Chairman*
 - c. Benefits Committee Report and Recommendation #3: Education Section Staffing – *Bill Haneke, Committee Chairman*
 - d. Benefits Committee Report and Recommendation #4: Mental Health Issues facing Veterans (refer to Virginia Wounded Warrior Program for study and recommendation) – *Bill Haneke, Committee Chairman*
 - e. Care Center Committee Report and Recommendation #1: Care Center Staffing – *Peyton Robertson, Committee Chairman*
 - f. Care Center Committee Report and Recommendation #2: Hampton Roads Veterans Care Center Pre-Planning Study – *Peyton Robertson, Committee Chairman*
 - g. Cemeteries Committee Report and Recommendation #1: Cemeteries Staffing – *George Melnyk, Committee Chairman*
 - h. Cemeteries Committee Report and Recommendation #2: Virginia Veterans Cemetery Woods Walkway Project – *George Melnyk, Committee Chairman*
 - i. BVS Chairman Report and Recommendation #1: Voting status of BVS *ex officio* members – *Thad Jones, BVS Chairman*
 - j. BVS Chairman Report and Recommendation #2: Adding additional citizen members to the BVS – *Thad Jones, BVS Chairman*
 - k. Review and Endorse JLC Legislative Recommendations – *George Corbett, JLC Representative*
 - l. Other new business
- IV. Prepare for Next Meeting – *Thad Jones, Chairman* (11:50 – 12:00)
- V. Adjourn (12:00)

ATTACHMENT 2

BOARD OF VETERANS SERVICES 2011 Executive Order 29 Recommendation Benefit Services Staffing

1. **OBJECTIVE:** (a) Ensure the Department of Veterans Services (DVS) has the required number of claims agents and adequate financial resources to meet current Code requirements; (b) identify shortfalls and the resources needed to correct those shortfalls; and (c) recommend new claims agents and resources to improve the delivery of benefit services to Virginia Veterans.
2. **BACKGROUND:**
 - DVS operates 20 Benefits Field Offices across the Commonwealth that provide free assistance to Virginia Veterans and eligible dependents in developing and filing claims for compensation and pension benefits with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA).
 - The offices are staffed by claims agents. Most offices are “one deep” – i.e. only one claims agent is assigned to that office.
 - §2.2-2002.1 of the Code of Virginia sets a ratio of one DVS claims agent for every 26,212 veterans residing in the Commonwealth.
 - Governor McDonnell and the 2011 General Assembly provided funding to fill four (4) vacant claims agent positions, bringing DVS in line with current Code requirements.
3. **DISCUSSION:**
 - The DVS Benefit Services Section has adequate financial resources and assigned positions to meet current Code requirements, which are based on veterans population.
 - However, the workload of the Benefits Services Section is also driven by the number of claims filed, which has expanded 42% in the past five years and is expected to continue to grow.
 - DVS claims agents are struggling to keep up with this growth in the number of claims filed. DVS does not have the financial resources to add staff, and also lacks the resources to adjust salaries to provide for internal realignment, incentive pay, or location differential pay; or to meet rising rent and utility costs.
 - When a claims agent assigned to a one-deep office is on vacation or is sick, the office is effectively closed. An open benefit field office may be 50 miles or more away.
 - New claims agents can take up to 26 days of vacation and sick leave a year, meaning that a benefit field office with only one claims agent could be closed as much as 10.5% of the time.
 - This increases to 12% of the time for a claims agent with five years of experience, and 14% for a claims agent who has been with the Commonwealth for 10 years.
 - The solution is to assign an extra claims agent to a group of three to four offices that are geographically clustered. For example, an additional claims agent in Northern Virginia would assist the Alexandria, Fairfax, and Quantico offices.
 - By filling in for claims agents that are on vacation or are sick, DVS offices will stay open.

- It is expected that 50% or more of the time of these “floating” agents will be taken up with filling in for other claims agents. The remaining time will be used to expand outreach to Veterans Service Organizations, provide services at itinerant service locations, offer expanded services such as on nights or weekends, and aide in outreach to homeless and incarcerated veterans.
 - DVS is also shorthanded in the Danville field office because of the increase in workload following a relocation to a new office adjacent to the Danville USDVA Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) and expanded itinerant services to veterans in the Martinsville area.
4. **RECOMMENDATIONS:** That the Governor increase funding for the DVS Benefits Services Section by \$350,000 and provide four additional positions, in order for DVS to (a) hire three “floater” claims agents; (b) hire a second claims agent for the Danville field office; and (c) have the resources necessary to meet rising operating costs.

ATTACHMENT 3

BOARD OF VETERANS SERVICES 2011 Executive Order 29 Recommendation Ratio of Claims Agents to Veterans

1. **OBJECTIVE:** Improve the delivery of benefit services to Virginia Veterans by changing the ratio of claims agents to Veterans.
2. **BACKGROUND:**
 - Veterans are entitled to disability compensation from the federal government for injuries or illnesses resulting from military service. To obtain this compensation, veterans must file claim with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA).
 - Filing a claim is a long, complex process. To assist Virginia Veterans, the Virginia Department of Veterans Services (DVS) operates 20 Benefits Field Offices across the Commonwealth that provide free assistance to Virginia Veterans and eligible dependents in developing and filing claims for compensation and pension benefits with the USDVA.
 - DVS Benefit Field Offices are staffed by claims agents, who provide direct, one-on-one assistance to veterans in developing and filing claims with the USDVA.
 - §2.2-2002.1 of the Code of Virginia sets a ratio of one DVS claims agent for every 26,212 veterans residing in the Commonwealth.
3. **DISCUSSION:**
 - Though DVS has the resources to meet current Code requirements, the number of claims filed by DVS on behalf of Virginia Veterans continues to grow, and DVS claims agents are struggling to keep up with this growing demand.
 - In FY05, DVS filed 18,550 claims;
 - In FY10, that number grew to 26,431 – a 42% increase.
 - The fiscal impact of compensation payments to Virginia Veterans is considerable:
 - \$1.57 billion: amount of total USDVA compensation payments in FFY09.
 - \$122 million: estimate of new compensation payments in FY10 for claims submitted by DVS on behalf of Virginia's Veterans.
 - \$8,000: average amount of a new claim awarded by the USDVA in Virginia.
 - With additional claims agents, DVS would be able to improve services to Virginia Veterans and increase the number of claims filed by:
 - Expanding outreach to Veterans Service Organizations;
 - Providing services at itinerant service locations (i.e. locations other than established offices);
 - Offering expanded service hours such as on nights or weekends; and
 - Increasing outreach to homeless and incarcerated veterans.
 - Changing the ratio from 1:26,212 to 1:23,000 would allow DVS to hire four (4) additional claims agents to provide the increased services discussed above.
 - The cost of adding the four positions is estimated to be \$275,000 per year.
 - Changing the ratio of claims agents to Veterans would enhance Virginia's status as the most veteran-friendly state in the nation.
4. **RECOMMENDATIONS:** That the Governor propose legislation changing the ratio of DVS claims agents to Veterans to one claims agent for every 23,000 Veterans and provide an additional \$275,000 per year to meet the costs of these positions.

ATTACHMENT 4

BOARD OF VETERANS SERVICES 2011 Executive Order 29 Recommendation Education Services Staffing

1. **OBJECTIVE:** Ensure that the State Approving Agency (SAA) for Veterans Education and Training of the Department of Veterans Services (DVS) has the necessary position authorization to meet its new mission under the Post 9/11 GI Bill Improvement Act.
2. **BACKGROUND:**
 - The Virginia SAA is responsible for approving courses of instruction at post-secondary educational institutions, so that eligible veterans, war orphans and widows may enroll in and receive financial assistance from the USDVA while pursuing an approved course or program.
 - At present, 994 institutions are approved; 426 are active (i.e. have a Veteran enrolled for FFY12 – October 2011-September 2012).
 - Over 42,000 Veterans and eligible dependents were enrolled in Virginia institutions in FFY10.
 - The Virginia SAA operates under a contract with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA), is authorized seven (7) positions, and is funded by federal (non-general) funds.
 - Beginning October 1, 2011, the Virginia SAA will also be required, under the federal contract, to perform compliance surveys under the Post 9/11 GI Bill Improvement Act.
 - This will involve conducting audits of Veterans educational and financial aid records at all active institutions in Virginia (i.e. the 426 schools with a Veteran enrolled for FFY12).
 - Compliance Surveys are conducted at schools and establishments to verify enrollment data, award actions and previous payments for accuracy and to ensure that payments made to eligible Veterans are in keeping with USDVA regulations.
 - The new mission will also help SAA monitor the graduation and employment rates of Veterans.
3. **DISCUSSION:**
 - SAA estimates that it will take two to three hours to audit a Veterans record. Even if only 10% of the records are audited, the time required exceeds the current capacity by a wide mark.
 - SAA cannot complete its new mission without additional manpower.
 - Two additional positions are required to ensure the Virginia SAA has the human resources necessary to meet its mission of ensuring access to higher education opportunities for Virginia Veterans and eligible dependents.
 - The estimated cost is \$70,000 per position. This includes salary, benefits, travel, etc.
 - SAA is federally funded, so there will be no fiscal impact to the Commonwealth. The SAA will either receive increased funding from the USDVA to pay for the new positions, or will reprogram funding currently used for education outreach.
4. **RECOMMENDATIONS:** That the Governor's budget include two additional positions for the Virginia Department of Veterans Services, State Approving Agency for Veterans Education and Training.

ATTACHMENT 5

BOARD OF VETERANS SERVICES 2011 Executive Order 29 Recommendation Mental Health Care for Veterans

1. **OBJECTIVE:** In conjunction with the Virginia Wounded Warrior Program, identify potential gaps that exist in mental health care for Virginia Veterans and develop recommendations for presentation to the Governor in 2012.
2. **BACKGROUND:**
 - a. The Virginia Wounded Warrior Program (VWWP) of the Department of Veterans Services (DVS) is a legislatively mandated program operated by the Virginia Department of Veterans Services in cooperation with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services and the Department of Rehabilitative Services.
 - b. The VWWP was established in 2008 in response to the growing need to improve and expand services to our nation's veterans and their family members whose lives have been touched by stress-related injuries or traumatic brain injury.
 - c. The VWWP serves veterans who are Virginia residents; members of the Virginia National Guard and Armed Forces Reserves not in active federal service; and family members of those veterans and service members.
 - d. Through an extensive network of local, federal and state partnerships, the VWWP helps Virginians find and get help regarding psychological health and traumatic brain injury.
 - e. Two committees work closely with the VWWP to shape the delivery of services to eligible participants – an Executive Strategy Committee and an Advisory Committee.
 - f. At the June 15, 2011 Board of Veterans Services meeting, Ms. Sandra Love raised several concerns related to potential gaps in mental health care for veterans.
 - g. The Board agreed to study the issues identified by Ms. Love as potential recommendations to the Governor and Department of Veterans Services under Executive Order 29 (EO29).
3. **DISCUSSION:**
 - The VWWP, in conjunction with its Executive Strategy and Advisory committees, is comprised of subject matter experts, and is well placed to assist the Board in issues related to mental health care for Veterans.
 - It is appropriate that the Board of Veterans Services request, through DVS, that the VWWP and its committees study the current delivery of services, identify gaps, and recommend solutions. This should be done in partnership with a member of the Board.
 - This is a complex issue that will take time to study appropriately. As such, it should be considered as an EO29 recommendation for 2012.
4. **RECOMMENDATIONS:** That the Board of Veterans Services request that (a) the Virginia Wounded Warrior Program, in partnership with its Executive Strategy and Advisory Committees, study issues related to mental health care for veterans and identify potential solutions; (b) Ms. Sandra Love serve as the Board's liaison to the VWWP while the issue is being studied; (c) the VWWP submit recommendations to the Board at the Board's Spring 2012 meeting; and (d) the Board include such recommendations in its 2012 Executive Order 29 recommendations to Governor McDonnell and the Department of Veterans Services.

ATTACHMENT 6

BOARD OF VETERANS SERVICES 2011 Executive Order 29 Recommendation Care Center Staffing

1. **OBJECTIVE:** Ensure that state veterans care centers have the required personnel and financial resources to delivery quality care to residents.
2. **BACKGROUND:**
 - DVS operates two veterans care centers – in Richmond and Roanoke.
 - The 240-bed Virginia Veterans Care Center (VVCC) in Roanoke has 260 authorized full-time positions. The VVCC includes 120 skilled-care beds, 60 beds in the Alzheimer's/Dementia unit, and 60 assisted-living beds.
 - The 160-bed Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center (SBVCC) in Richmond has 233 authorized full-time positions. The SBVCC includes 120 skilled-care beds and 40 beds in the Alzheimer's/Dementia unit.
 - A 40-bed addition (skilled care beds) is planned for the SBVCC. Design work will commence this fall. Construction will likely begin in summer 2012 and be completed in March 2013.
 - Staffing ratios per resident are higher for skilled care beds than for assisted living beds, which accounts for the higher staffing ratios at the SBVCC than at the VVCC.
3. **DISCUSSION:**
 - The VVCC and SBVCC both have adequate staffing and spending authority to meet current (FY12) service levels.
 - SBVCC will require additional staff and appropriation (spending authority) in late FY13 and ongoing for the 40-bed addition.
 - 51 additional full-time positions will be needed.
 - \$2,700,000 in additional appropriation (spending authority) will be required.
4. **RECOMMENDATION:** That the Governor's budget proposal include an authorization for 51 additional positions and \$2,700,000 additional appropriation in FY13 for the Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center addition.

ATTACHMENT 7

BOARD OF VETERANS SERVICES 2011 Executive Order 29 Recommendation Hampton Pre-Planning Study

1. **OBJECTIVE:** Ensure that a viable and appropriate site is selected for the construction of the Hampton Roads Veterans Care Center.
2. **BACKGROUND:**
 - DVS operates two veterans care centers – the Virginia Veterans Care Center (VVCC) in Roanoke and the Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center (SBVCC) in Richmond.
 - A 40-bed addition is planned for the SBVCC. Design work will commence this fall. Construction will likely begin in summer 2012 and be completed in March 2013.
 - The Governor, through the Department of Veterans Services (DVS), was authorized and has applied for grant funding from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) to construct new care centers of up to 240 beds each in Hampton Roads and Northern Virginia.
 - DVS has requested \$52 million from the USDVA for each project. This amount would be matched by \$28 million in state funds for each project.
 - Virginia is on the USDVA grant funding priority list and could receive funding for the Hampton care center as early as FFY12.
 - A potential site for the Hampton Roads Veterans Care Center has been identified on the grounds of the Hampton VA Medical Center (Hampton VAMC).
 - DVS has also been advised that a site may be available on Fort Monroe, after it is turned over to the Commonwealth.
 - Pre-planning studies are used to evaluate such factors as site access; electrical, water, and other utility capacity; ability of the local soil/bedrock to support the building's foundation; vertical/horizontal scale of the building; etc.
 - The Department of General Services, on behalf of DVS, has issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for architecture and engineering (A&E) services for the SBVCC addition. As part of the RFP, firms were also requested to provide bids to conduct a pre-planning study for the Hampton Roads Veterans Care Center.
3. **DISCUSSION:**
 - A pre-planning study is required before the Commonwealth takes possession of either the Hampton VAMC or the Fort Monroe site.
 - The pre-planning study will determine the relative feasibility of either site to serve as the future home of the Hampton Roads Veterans Care Center.
 - The study should be initiated as soon as possible in order to position the Commonwealth for receipt of the federal grant funds and move the project forward expeditiously.
4. **RECOMMENDATION:** That the Governor re-appropriate up to \$300,000 for DVS to use in FY12 for a pre-planning for the Hampton Roads Veterans Care Center.

ATTACHMENT 8

BOARD OF VETERANS SERVICES 2011 Executive Order 29 Recommendation Cemeteries Staffing

1. **OBJECTIVE:** Ensure that state veterans cemeteries have the required personnel, equipment, and financial resources to operate in a safe, efficient manner and meet national shrine standards.
2. **BACKGROUND:**
 - DVS operates three state veterans cemeteries – in Amelia, Dublin, and Suffolk.
 - State veterans cemeteries serve the burial, memorial, and perpetual care needs of Virginia's Veterans and their spouses and eligible dependents.
 - Services are offered at no cost to Veterans, and at \$300 to spouses and eligible dependents, and include:
 - Three burial options: casketed ground burial, cremation ground burial, or cremation above-ground inurnment in a columbarium niche;
 - Assigning a gravesite;
 - Opening and closing the grave;
 - Ordering and placing the grave marker; and
 - Providing perpetual care.
 - The Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations recommended, and Governor McDonnell and the 2011 General Assembly provided, additional funding that will enable the state veterans cemeteries to:
 - Fill three vacant positions;
 - Make up an operating budget shortfall for the Dublin cemetery;
 - Begin phase replacement of worn out equipment;
 - Install new road/highway directional signs for the Dublin cemetery, plus add signs for the Amelia and Suffolk cemeteries;
 - Purchase grass seed/fertilizer;
 - Staff the cemeteries on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, in order to assist families with locating grave sites and placing flowers, etc.
3. **DISCUSSION:**
 - With the additional funding provided by Governor McDonnell and the 2011 General Assembly, Virginia's state veterans cemeteries now have the personnel, equipment, and financial resources to operate in a safe and efficient manner and to attain and maintain national shrine status.
 - No further action is required at this time.
4. **RECOMMENDATION:** That this recommendation be tabled.

ATTACHMENT 9

BOARD OF VETERANS SERVICES 2011 Executive Order 29 Recommendation Woods Walkway Project – Virginia Veterans Cemetery (Amelia)

1. **OBJECTIVE:** Ensure that state veterans cemeteries have the required personnel, equipment, and financial resources to operate in a safe, efficient manner and meet national shrine standards.
2. **BACKGROUND:**
 - In his letter of June 15, 2011, Commissioner Paul Galanti requested that the Board of Veterans Services Cemetery Committee assist the Department of Veterans Services with the Virginia Veterans Cemetery Woods Walkway Project.
 - Specifically, the Commissioner requested that the Board participate by:
 - Reviewing/recommending placement of a Scatter Garden area within the woods walkway;
 - Reviewing/recommending the route or revised route for the walkway;
 - Reviewing/recommending the designated areas for placement of at least 10 granite memorials;
 - Reviewing/recommending areas for brick walkways to be installed by the cemetery crew. The walkways will allow visitors to walk from the woods walkway to the granite memorials and back;
 - Reviewing/recommending placement of donated granite benches along the brick walkways;
 - Reviewing/recommending areas along the brick walkways to and around the features for placement of donated granite benches;
 - Reviewing/recommending placement of bush and flower bed placements throughout this whole area;
 - Reviewing/recommending placement of additional trees and types of trees for this whole area.
3. **DISCUSSION:**
 - Mr. Donald Kaiserman has volunteered to serve as the Board's representative on this project and will assist the Department of Veterans Services as requested by Commissioner Galanti.
 - This request is outside the scope of Executive Order 29 (EO29); therefore, a recommendation to Governor McDonnell under EO29 is neither appropriate nor required. Instead, the Board should continue to be engaged with this project as part of its Code-mandated duties.
4. **RECOMMENDATIONS:** That this recommendation be tabled, as it is not part of EO29, and that Mr. Kaiserman serve as the Board's representative to this project, reporting to the Board as appropriate.

ATTACHMENT 10

BOARD OF VETERANS SERVICES 2011 Executive Order 29 Recommendation Voting Privileges for *Ex Officio* Members

1. **OBJECTIVE:** Strengthen the capacity of the Board of Veterans Services (BVS) to fulfill the Powers and Duties set forth in the Code of Virginia by granting voting privileges to all *ex officio* members.
2. **BACKGROUND:**
 - BVS was established in 2003 as a policy board in the executive branch of state government. The Board consists of:
 - 11 citizen members, appointed by the Governor;
 - 5 legislative members; and
 - 3 *ex officio* members.
 - The Commissioner of Veterans Services serves *ex officio* with full voting privileges.
 - The Chairmen of the Board of Trustees of the Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) and of the Joint Leadership Council (JLC) of Veterans Service Organizations serve *ex officio* without voting privileges.
 - Under §2.2-2452, a majority of the Board members constitutes a quorum. Under current law, the BVS must actually have two quorums to conduct business – a quorum of all members, and a quorum of voting members.
3. **DISCUSSION:**
 - The BVS works closely with the VSF and JLC to support the delivery of veterans services in the Commonwealth of Virginia.
 - For example, the JLC might advance an issue to the BVS for study. After study, the BVS could return the issue to the JLC, pass it to the Commissioner for action, or advise that the VSF seek donated or other funding for the issue.
 - Because of the close interaction between the three boards and the critical linking role played by the BVS, the JLC and VSF should be fully represented on the BVS.
 - In situations like the BVS, Roberts Rules of Order recommends full participation by all board members, including *ex officio* members.
 - Granting voting privileges to all *ex officio* members is cost neutral, as these members already attend BVS meetings.
4. **RECOMMENDATIONS:** That voting status be granted to all *ex officio* members of the Board of Veterans Services.

ATTACHMENT 11

BOARD OF VETERANS SERVICES 2011 Executive Order 29 Recommendation Additional Citizen Board Members

1. **OBJECTIVE:** Strengthen the capacity of the Board of Veterans Services (BVS) to fulfill the Powers and Duties set forth in the Code of Virginia by increasing the number of citizen board members from 11 to 15.
2. **BACKGROUND:**
 - BVS was established in 2003 as a policy board in the executive branch of state government. The Board consists of:
 - 11 citizen members, appointed by the Governor;
 - 3 *ex officio* members; and
 - 5 legislative members.
 - The Code specifies that: *In making appointments, the Governor shall endeavor to...[select] appointees of such qualifications and experience as will allow them to provide expertise and insight into:*
 1. *Best practices in benefits claims services, medical and health care management, or cemetery operations;*
 2. *Performance measurements and general management principles; and*
 3. *Nonprofit volunteer operations and management.*
 - The Board has three standing committees (Benefits, Care Centers, and Cemeteries). The Board also establishes *ad hoc* committees as required (e.g., Bylaws, Nominating, etc.).
 - The number of Virginia Veterans has increased by 40,000 in the 10 years; the services provided by the Commonwealth have expanded to meet their new or expanded needs.
 - In the past decade, the Virginia Department of Veterans Services has opened five new benefit field offices, two veterans cemeteries, and a veterans care center, and has established the Virginia Wounded Warrior Program.
3. **DISCUSSION:**
 - The *ex officio* and legislative members bring unique and irreplaceable skills and experience to the Board. However, because of the demands on their time (service on other boards, legislative duties, etc.) they are unavailable to serve on committees.
 - Considerable demands are also placed on the Board Chairman and Vice Chairman (providing leadership and direction, representing BVS on other boards, etc.), meaning that these two citizen members are also unavailable to participate in committee work.
 - This leaves only 9 citizen members to do the “heavy lifting” on the committees.
 - Increasing the number of citizen members from 11 to 15 will provide the Board with additional expertise and capacity to meet Code-mandated requirements and will improve committee operations, enabling the Board to better serve Virginia’s veterans and support the Governor’s goal of making Virginia the most veteran-friendly state in the nation.
 - The increase in members will result in a small increase in mileage reimbursement.
4. **RECOMMENDATIONS:** That the number of citizen members on the Board of Veterans Services be increased from 11 to 15.

ATTACHMENT 12

SUMMARY OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 29 (EO29) RECOMMENDATIONS TO GOVERNOR MCDONNELL

The Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (the JLC) met July 13, 2011. At the meeting the JLC adopted three EO29 recommendations for consideration by the Governor for the 2012 General Assembly session:

1. Recommendation 1
 - a. Objective: Provide a simple, ready means of identification of veterans status for Virginia's veterans.
 - b. Recommendation: Add a veterans indicator to the Virginia Driver's License/ID Card.
2. Recommendation 2
 - a. Objective: Establish an exemption from the state and local Sales or Use Taxes in the Code of Virginia for Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs)
 - b. Recommendation: Grant a state sales tax exemption to 501(c)(19) VSOs.
3. Recommendation 3
 - a. Objective: Identify unclaimed cremated remains (cremains) of veterans at Virginia funeral homes to facilitate the honorable interment of the cremains at a state veterans cemetery.
 - b. Recommendation: Require funeral homes to provide the names of unclaimed cremains to the Department of Veterans Services.

The JLC also voted to send a resolution to Governor McDonnell, calling on him to take steps to reduce veteran homelessness in Virginia. A copy of the resolution will be provided to the Board of Veterans Services at a later date.

I request that the Board of Veterans Services support the EO29 recommendations made by the JLC, and that the Board support the JLC's resolution to the Governor calling on him to reduce veterans homelessness in Virginia.

Respectfully,

Jenny M. Holbert
Chair